



HAY... Making, Storing, Feeding

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In beef cattle operations, the most common source of stored feed is hay. If hay is harvested at the proper stage of plant growth and undamaged by weather, it can provide nutrients at the lowest possible cost, except for pasture or silage. Feeding hay is also one of the best ways to increase year-round carrying capacity, as forage is harvested during periods of rapid, excess growth and then fed during stress periods. As a result, producers can feed cattle 365 days a year. To make the best use of hay in your operation, you need to consider several factors: the quality of the hay, the cost of feeding and the factors influencing losses, including haymaking, storage and feeding systems.

Quality The primary objective of any hay-feeding program is to provide plenty of high-quality hay to meet the animals' nutritional needs. Many factors affect the quality of hay: soil fertility, the stage of forage maturity when harvested, the moisture available during the growing season, harvesting conditions, and storage. Because of those factors, most operations produce hay of varying qualities in different cuttings. To determine the quality of each cutting, have the hay analyzed by a laboratory. If you know the quality of each cutting, you not only can feed the highest quality hay to animals with the highest requirements, but you also can estimate the amount of supplement needed to meet animal requirements with each quality of hay.

Cost The cost of feeding hay varies widely. Poor-quality hay is always more expensive to feed than high quality hay. If you feed low-quality hay, you must also provide extra supplement to meet the animals' nutritional requirements. When you pay for both hay and the supplement required to maintain the animal, low-quality hay becomes very expensive. By feeding hay according to quality and animal needs, you can get more return from your hay production. Losses of quality can occur during haymaking, storage and feeding.

Haymaking losses Producers should harvest forage when it is in a high quality stage. Timing is critical: If you do not time the harvest carefully, forage quality will plummet before storage. The causes of losses include cutting hay past the optimum stage of maturity, rain leaching out soluble nutrients before baling, water respiring from plant tissues, and leaf shattering.

To reduce haymaking losses, producers should:

- Cut hay at the proper stage of maturity.
- Cure the hay as fast as possible.
- Minimize excess manipulation of the hay.
- Bale the hay promptly when it is dry.
- Store it according to bale type.



Storage losses The percentage of moisture in hay at storage directly affects its nutrient and dry matter losses. The higher the moisture content at storage, the greater the losses. High moisture conditions allow hay to heat up, which causes losses. The degree of heating that develops during storage depends on the moisture of the hay and its density, size and shape in storage. Tight round bales suffer fewer losses than do loose ones.

Feeding losses The amount of hay lost during feeding depends on the feeding system and on the amount allocated per animal per feeding time. An efficient feeding system should keep losses to a practical minimum. Feeding losses are caused mostly by trampling, leaf shatter, chemical and physical deterioration, fecal contamination, over consumption and refusal.

Summary Hay can provide nutrients at a low cost and can increase year-round carrying capacity if the cattle producer pays close attention to the quality of the hay and mitigates as much as possible the factors influencing losses, such as during haymaking, storage and feeding.

For the full article and more information, [click here](#).

More Than A Handshake



Negotiating Grazing, Hunting & Livestock Leases

FREE Lease Negotiation Workshop Friday, June 3, 2016 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Brand Rm., Cattle Raisers Building, 1301 West 7th St., Fort Worth

Tiffany Dowell Lashmet and Shannon Ferrell, extension ag law specialists will provide the insights on grazing and hunting leases and livestock lease agreements. They will discuss legal aspects of leasing, and offer pointers on what terms should be included in each of these leases. Participants will also receive a agricultural leasing handbook containing information, checklists, and sample forms for lease agreements. Tiffany and Shannon focus on providing information to those in the agricultural industry and their quick wit and ability to simply explain legal issues will keep your interest through the presentation. Additionally, question and answer session afterward will reward participants with expanded information on topics of interest.

To register contact the Extension office at 817.884.1945 or on-line at:
<http://agrillife.org/urbantarrantag/program-registration>

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Soil Testing

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Soil, Water and Forage Testing Laboratory is housed in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University. The laboratory began operations in 1946 primary as a soil testing laboratory. Over the next 34 years, irrigation water testing, plant and forage analysis, and other clientele requested analyses have been added.



The laboratory's primary mission is to provide research based analysis and non-bias recommendations for agronomic and non-agronomic soil analysis, plant tissue analysis, forage nutritive analysis, and non-drinking water analysis. The laboratory also aids the research and extension communities with analysis needs. We also work closely with a number of Texas A&M University service laboratories, other state agency laboratories, and private laboratories with method development, troubleshooting and quality assurance/quality control issues, as well as, forwarding clientele to insure their needs are met.

For more information, please visit the Soil, Water and Forage Testing [website](#), or contact us by emailing soiltesting@ag.tamu.edu or by calling 979-845-4816.

The Texas Plant

Disease Diagnostic Laboratory

TPDDL is a service and effort of the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at Texas A&M University in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. This laboratory provides plant disease diagnostic services to AgriLife Extension personnel, homeowners, farmers, greenhouse and nursery producers, landscape contractors, interiorscapers, arborists, consultants, and any other group or individual needing accurate identification of plant disease problems. The TPDDL strives to provide the most accurate and rapid plant disease diagnosis together with recommendations for effective plant disease management. Customer sample inquiry (phone) support is available from 9:00am -12:00noon and 1:00pm – 4:00pm, Monday to Friday or plantclinic@tamu.edu

Stiles Farm Field Day, June 21

(Featuring Drone Technology and Sugarcane Aphid Update)

Blair Fannin, THRALL – The future of drone technology in Texas Blacklands agriculture will be one of the featured programs at the June 21 Stiles Farm Field Day.

The 53rd annual field day will also feature an update on the sugarcane aphid, plus programs on nitrogen application and soil compaction, horn fly control on livestock, pesticide laws and regulation update, and an aquatic weed management program. The Stiles Farm is located at 5700 Farm-to-Market Road 1063, near the intersection of U.S. Highway 79, 1 mile east of Thrall. “This year’s field day will feature a demonstration on drone technology and its potential future in Blackland production agriculture,” said Ryan Collett, Stiles Farm manager and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist.



“With wet conditions delaying side-dress applications across the region, we will also have a presentation on utilizing ‘rescue nitrogen,’ as well as a discussion of the impact of soil compaction. Overall, we have topics of interest for everyone. “We think attendees will go home with new ideas and strategies they can incorporate into their own operations. I do want to thank our area agribusiness for sponsoring the meal and in particular the Williamson County Farm Bureau for paying the registration fee for producers wanting to obtain CEU credits.”

The field day is hosted by AgriLife Extension in coordination with the Stiles Farm Foundation. Registration is free and begins at 7:30 a.m. The program begins at 8:25 a.m. and will feature the following sessions:

- **Future of Drones in the Texas Blacklands**, Dr. Dale Cope, associate professor of engineering, Texas A&M; Bob Avant, program director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research corporate relations; Dr. Alex Thomasson, AgriLife Research agricultural engineer, all of College Station.
- **Rescue Nitrogen: Is It Too Little Too Late? and Sugarcane Aphid Update**, Dr. Ronnie Schnell, AgriLife Extension agronomist.
- **Soil Compaction, What We Can’t See Can Cost Us**, Dr. Jake Mowrer, AgriLife Extension soil fertility specialist, College Station.
- **Horn Fly Control/Vet Gun Demonstration**, Dr. Sonja Swiger, AgriLife Extension entomologist, Stephenville.
- **Pesticide Record Keeping and Disposal, Worker Protection Standards Update**, Dr. Mark Matocha, AgriLife Extension agricultural and environmental safety specialist, College Station.

The noon lunch program will be at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Taylor and will feature the presentation of the 2016 Agriculturalist of the Year and Agribusiness Person of the Year awards sponsored by the Williamson County Farm Bureau. Stiles Farm Foundation scholarships will also be presented.

A keynote address titled “Managing Challenges, Creating Opportunities” will be given by Dr. Doug Steele, AgriLife Extension director, College Station.

The afternoon program will begin at 1:30 p.m. Aquatic Weed Management will be presented by Dr. Michael Masser, department head for wildlife and fisheries sciences at Texas A&M, College Station.

The morning session will award one continuing education unit in integrated pest management and one in laws and regulations for Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide applicator license holders. The afternoon session will award one general continuing education credit.

The Stiles Farm Foundation was established by the Stiles family at Thrall in Williamson County. According to the foundation, J.V. and H.A. Stiles wanted to commemorate their father, James E. Stiles, and the land he worked. They also wanted to help neighboring farmers and others throughout the Central Texas Blacklands region learn new farming practices. In 1961, the Stiles Farm Foundation was established and became part of the Texas A&M University System. The farm is used by AgriLife Extension and AgriLife Research, which conduct field experiments and use the facility as a teaching platform.

For more information contact: Ryan Collett, 512-898-2214, rmcollett@tamu.edu

Contact Us!



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If you know of anyone who would like to be added to our Ag Producers list, please have them contact us.

SUMMER 2016

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Weather forecast by Chris Coleman, meteorologist at ERCOT

COMMODITY PRICES OUTLOOK

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Beef market outlook by Harlan Hughes of Beef Magazine